

REMARKS/DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 1-9 and 11-19 are pending in the application.

Applicants respectfully request once again that the Examiner indicate whether the drawings are acceptable.

Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested in view of the following Remarks.

35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9 and 12-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Drori U.S. Patent 5,146,215 ("Drori") in view of Reese U.S. Patent 5,583,786 ("Reese"), and claims 11 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Drori in view of Reese and further in view of Ciciora U.S. Patent 5,815,297 ("Ciciora").

Applicants respectfully traverse those rejections for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1

At the outset, the undersigned attorney would like to thank the Examiner for the courtesy of a brief telephonic discussion on 23 February 2009 to clarify the Office Action. The undersigned attorney asked the Examiner to indicate exactly what in Drori is supposed to correspond to the recited "plurality of devices" of claim 1. The Examiner indicated that "*everything shown in FIG. 1B*" of Drori is supposed to correspond to one device of the communication network of claim 1.

Among other things, the communication network of claim 1 includes a plurality of devices, where each device includes a master integral to the device, and wherein the communication network activates one of the masters as an active master for generating the command signals in response to the received control signals, and for transferring the command signals to the communication interfaces of the plurality of devices.

The Office Action states that the master of claim 1 is disclosed in Drori as being "*inside the control unit 14.*"

Applicants respectfully disagree.

The master of claim 1 generates command signals in response to received control signals, and transfers command signals to communication interfaces of a plurality of devices. In contrast, nothing “*inside the control unit 14*” transfers command signals to communication interfaces of plurality of devices (i.e., a plurality of “*everything shown in FIG. 1B*” which the Examiner has stated corresponds to the “device” of claim 1). According to an interpretation where “*everything shown in FIG. 1B*” corresponds to one device as recited in claim 1, then “*inside the control unit 14*” could only correspond to the recited master IF it also transferred command signals to communication interfaces of a plurality of “*everything shown in FIG. 1B*.” Instead, the Office Action specifically cites the connection between control unit 14 and elements 15 in FIG. 1B as supposedly transferring the recited command signals to the plurality of devices. However, elements 15 are all part of only one “device” of claim 1 – since the “device” as defined by the Examiner is “*everything shown in FIG. 1B*”.

So, Applicants respectfully submit that Drori does not disclose a plurality of devices – or even one device – that includes a master that generates command signals in response to received control signals, and transfers command signals to the communication interfaces of a plurality of devices. Reese does not remedy this shortcoming.

Therefore Applicants respectfully submit that no combination of Drori and Reese could ever produce the communication network of claim 1.

Also among other things, each device in the network of claim 1 includes a communication interface for receiving command signals that are transferred to the communication interface from a master of one of the devices.

The Office Action states that the master of claim 1 is disclosed in Drori as being “*inside the control unit 14*” and that the communication interface of claim 1 corresponds to receiver 12 of FIG. 1B.

However, “*inside the control unit 14*” does not transfer any command signals (or any other signals, for that matter) to receiver 12 in FIG. 1B of Drori. So the “*inside the control unit 14*” and receiver 12 of FIG. 1B cannot possibly correspond

respectively to the master and communication interface recited in claim 1.

Therefore Applicants respectfully submit that no combination of Drori and Reese could ever produce the communication network of claim 1.

Also among other things, in the network of claim 1, each device includes a control circuit that controlling the operation of the device operating circuit in response to command signals that are generated by an active master.

The Office Action states that control unit 14 of FIG. 1B of Drori supposedly corresponds to the recited control circuit, and that the command signals "*can be from #12, #11, #13.*"

Applicants respectfully disagree. As plainly recited in claim 1, the command signals are generated by the master. The Office Action states that "*inside the control unit 14*" supposedly corresponds to the recited master of claim 1. Elements "*#12, #11, #13*" in FIG. 1B of Drori do not correspond to the recited master of claim 1, and therefore the signals they generate cannot correspond to the recited command signals of claim 1 which are generated by the master.

Therefore Applicants respectfully submit that no combination of Drori and Reese could ever produce the communication network of claim 1.

Also among other things, in the network of claim 1 a control unit generates control signals, and a plurality of masters in a plurality of devices receive the control signals.

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited art does not disclose or suggest a network having this combination of features.

The Office Action indicates that control unit 14 in FIG. 1B of Drori supposedly corresponds to the recited control unit of claim 1, "*inside the control unit 14*" supposedly corresponds to the recited master, and "*everything shown in FIG. 1B*" supposedly corresponds to one of the devices in the network of claim 1.

Applicants respectfully disagree.

Drori does not disclose any plurality of masters ("*inside the control unit 14*") in a plurality of devices ("*everything shown in FIG. 1B*") that receive control signals from a control unit 14 of FIG. 1B.

Therefore Applicants respectfully submit that no combination of Drori and Reese could ever produce the communication network of claim 1.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable over the cited art.

Claims 2-9

Claims 2-9 depend from claim 1 and are deemed patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1, and because of numerous other features which are not disclosed or suggested by any combination of the cited art.

Claim 12

Among other things, the method of claim 12 includes activating a first master included in one of the plurality of devices to become an active master; receiving control signals at the active master from a control unit; and in response to the control signals, transmitting command signals from the active master to the plurality devices to control operations of the devices.

The Office Action states that Drori discloses all of these features.

Applicants respectfully disagree.

The Office Action states that "*master is inside control unit, or they are the same*" and that Drori discloses transmitting command signals from the active master to the plurality of devices in the connection shown in "*FIG. 1B, from #14 to #15.*" That means that the elements 15 must correspond to the plurality of devices of claim 12. However, in claim 12 the first master is included in one of the plurality of devices. Meanwhile, control unit 14 (supposedly the master of claim 1) is NOT included in one of controlled devices of element 15.

So, Applicants respectfully submit that the interpretation of FIG. 1B of Drori offered in the Office Action does not activate a first master included in one of the plurality of devices to become an active master; receiving control signals at the active master from a control unit; and in response to the control signals, transmitting command signals from the active master to the plurality of devices to control operations of the devices.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that no combination of Drori and

Reese could ever produce the method of claim 12.

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 12 is patentable over the cited art.

Claims 13-18

Claims 13-18 depend from claim 12 and are deemed patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 12, and because of numerous other features which are not disclosed or suggested by any combination of the cited art.

Claims 11 and 19

Claims 11 and 19 depend from claims 1 and 12 respectively. Applicants respectfully submit that Ciciora does not remedy the shortcomings of Drorj and Reese as set forth above with respect to claims 1 and 12, and therefore claims 11 and 19 are deemed patentable for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1 and 12.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing explanations, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and reexamine the present application, allow claims 1-9 and 11-19 and pass the application to issue. In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact Kenneth D. Springer (Reg. No. 39,843) at (571) 283.0720 to discuss these matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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